

Application No. 09/594,513

Amendment under 37 C.F.R. §1.111 dated November 10, 2004

Response to the Office Action dated August 11, 2004

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action dated August 11, 2004. Claims 1-6 and 9-12 remain pending in the application. Claims 9, 10, and 12 were allowed. Claims 3-6 were merely objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim, but are otherwise allowable. By this Amendment, claims 3-6 were rewritten into independent form and are also in condition for allowance. The remaining prior art rejections are respectfully traversed below.

The Prior Art Rejections

Claims 1, 2, and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over **Hinoue et al.** (U.S. Patent No. 6,118,485). Claim 11 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over **Hinoue**. However, it is submitted that the prior art does not teach or suggest all the features recited in the present claimed invention.

For instance, amended independent claim 1 recites a “reinforcing portion located near said connector” and “said connector and reinforcing portion being independent and separate members.” In contrast, the card edge 33a of **Hinoue** referenced in the Office Action is actually *a part of* the connector 34, and not the present claimed reinforcing portion that is located *near* the connector, and that is also *independent and separate* from the connector. For at least these reasons, the present claimed invention patentably distinguishes over the prior art.

Therefore, entry of this Amendment is respectfully requested to place the present application into condition for allowance. An early Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

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If the Examiner believes that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

It is also submitted that the Office Action was improperly made final. According to MPEP 706.07(a), an Office Action may not be made final where the Examiner introduces a new ground of rejection that is neither necessitated by applicant's amendment of the claims nor based on information submitted in an IDS. The new ground of rejection introduced in this Office Action could have been made to the original, broader claims. Thus, the previous amendments did not necessitate the new rejection. The reference cited by the Examiner is not present in the IDS filed for this application. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the finality of the Office Action be withdrawn.

If this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

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